

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BRUSSE 07528 071747Z

ACTION SIL-01

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 DHA-02 SS-15 NSC-05 L-03

H-02 TRSE-00 IO-14 DODE-00 PM-04 PA-02 PRS-01

SP-02 USIA-15 /107 W

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R 071729Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0717

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

UNCLAS BRUSSELS 07528

USEEC

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, ICFTU, SHUM

SUBJ: ICFTU DEFENDS HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGNERS IN USSR

1. THE INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS (ICFTU) HAS JOINED THE CAMPAIGN PROTESTING SOVIET GOVERNMENT ACTIONS AGAINST TWO JEWISH HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGNERS, ANATOLY SHCHARANSKY AND IOSIF BEGUN. SHCHARANSKY'S WIFE, NATALIA, ACCOMPANIED BY AARON BARNEA, BRUSSELS-BASED REPRESENTATIVE OF HISTADRUT (ISRAELI LABOR CONFEDERATION), VISITED ICFTU HEADQUARTERS ON JULY 1.

2. IN A PRESS STATEMENT JUST RELEASED, THE ICFTU CALLS ATTENTION TO THE PLIGHT OF THE TWO MEN. TEXT OF PRESS UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 BRUSSE 07528 071747Z

STATEMENT, HEADED "UNIONS BACK SOVIET RIGHTS CAMPAIGNERS":
BEGIN TEXT:

TWO PROMINENT JEWISH HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGNERS WHO ARE BEING HARASSED INSIDE THE SOVIET UNION HAVE RECEIVED INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION SUPPORT. ANATOLY SHCHARANSKY AND IOSIF BEGUN, BOTH OF WHOM HAVE BEEN ACTIVE IN

MONITORING SOVIET OBSERVANCE OF THE HELSINKI AGREEMENTS, HAVE PERSISTENTLY BEEN REFUSED PERMISSION TO EMIGRATE TO ISRAEL. THE ATTENTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS WAS DRAWN TO THEIR CASES BY THE ICFTU'S ISRAELI AFFILIATE, HISTADRUT. SHCHARANSKY HAS BEEN ACCUSED IN THE SOVIET PRESS OF BEING A CIA AGENT. EVEN THOUGH PRESIDENT CARTER HAS TAKEN THE UNUSUAL STEP OF PUBLICLY DENYING ANY CONNECTION BETWEEN SHCHARANSKY AND THE CIA, IT IS BELIEVED THAT A TRIAL IS BEING PREPARED ON THE BASIS OF A CHARGE OF TREASON. IN ADDITION BOTH MEN HAVE BEEN ACCUSED OF "PARASITISM", I.E. UNEMPLOYMENT. BOTH WERE DISMISSED FROM THEIR JOBS FOLLOWING THEIR APPLICATIONS TO EMIGRATE, AND HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO CONTINUAL HARASSMENT. SHCHARANSKY'S TRIAL IS SEEN AS A TEST CASE. IF HE IS HELD TO BE GUILTY OF TREASON, HIS COLLEAGUES IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT COULD BE REGARDED AS GUILTY BY ASSOCIATION. SHCHARANSKY'S WIFE, WHO WAS FORCED TO LEAVE THE SOVIET UNION ON THE DAY AFTER THEIR MARRIAGE, VISITED ICFTU HEADQUARTERS ON 1 JULY FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH GENERAL SECRETARY OTTO KERSTEN AND OTHER OFFICIALS. THE ICFTU HAS DECIDED TO ASK ITS AFFILIATES TO PARTICIPATE IN A CAMPAIGN ON THE TWO MEN'S BEHALF. END TEXT.HINTON

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